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Bush Rejects Sanctions Over Lithuania

*'This Is Munich,'
Landsbergis Says*

By David Remnick
Washington Post Foreign Service

MOSCOW, April 24—Lithuanian President Vytautas Landsbergis said today that President Bush's decision to defer ordering any sanctions against Moscow in the Soviet secession crisis amounts to a political "Munich," a reference to Britain and France's attempt to appease Nazi Germany in 1938.

"We feared that America might sell us. Let people decide whether that has happened," Landsbergis said. "I don't understand whether it is possible to sell the freedom of one group of people for the freedom

of another. If that is so, then of what value is the idea of freedom itself? . . . This is Munich."

Ever since Lithuania declared independence March 11, Landsbergis has been searching for stronger support from the United States and the West. Legislators in Vilnius had expected the U.S. administration to take some economic measures against Moscow today. But the Bush administration has so far been reluctant to sharpen the tone of its rhetoric, much less impose sanctions, for fear of endangering relations with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

The Kremlin, for its part, will continue to exert economic and political pressure on Lithuania whether or not the U.S. administration and the West decide in the future to

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*Punishing Moscow
Would Be 'Mistake'*

By Ann Devroy and Don Oberdorfer
Washington Post Staff Writers

President Bush yesterday decided not to retaliate against the Soviet Union for its crackdown against Lithuania, saying that sanctions against Moscow could set back freedom around the world.

Bush emerged from an hour-long discussion with congressional leaders to offer a lengthy, emotional explanation for his reluctance to penalize the Soviets, at least for now. Quoting baseball philosopher Yogi Berra, Bush said, "I don't want to make the wrong mistake."

Saying he had put off a decision

on whether to impose any sanctions, the president said: "I'm concerned about the freedom of Poland; I'm concerned about the evolution of freedom in the other Baltic states whose incorporation we haven't recognized and I'm concerned that we not inadvertently do something that compels the Soviet Union to take action that would set back the whole cause of freedom around the world."

With the Soviet political and economic systems under great strain and President Mikhail Gorbachev scheduled to arrive in this country for a summit meeting just five weeks from today, Bush said this is "a very complex time" in which to make a decision about the U.S. sanctions he had promised to consider. Last Tuesday, Bush said he

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VYTAUTAS LANDSBERGIS

...feared that America might sell us"

West 'Sells' Lithuania, Leader Says

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levy any sanctions, a high-ranking Soviet official said today.

The level of tensions between Moscow and Vilnius shows no sign of abating. KGB Lt. Anatoli Parakhin said in an official statement that border patrols around Lithuania have been increased and surveillance has been stepped up to watch over "possible contacts between Soviet vessels and foreign boats in territorial waters and within the Soviet economic zone to avert the transfer of weapons and ammunition to Lithuania."

Lithuanian officials have denied trying to get weapons from abroad and have said that the only use of force in its confrontation with Moscow has been by the Soviet army.

Tonight, the Soviet news agency Tass reported that a shot was fired Monday night at an open window of a Soviet army barracks in Vilnius. The report said that no one was injured, but that ballistics experts believe a combat weapon was used.

Asked in an interview how the Soviet Union would react if the United States were to decide to rescind promises of trade agreements or other future economic benefits, Gorbachev's spokesman, Arkady Maslennikov, said, "We'd be sorry, but only sorry. It wouldn't change our course in relation to Lithuania. This is a matter of the Soviet constitution."

A Foreign Ministry spokesman, Vadim Perfiliev, said any U.S. sanctions would provide Lithuania with "false hopes and have negative consequences" on the international scene.



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Lithuanians wait for bus in Vilnius on route still operating despite fuel shortage.



AGENCE FRANCE-PRESSE

Men in Vilnius park read late news about their republic's dispute with Moscow.

Maslennikov added that so far he did not think the secession crisis—and Moscow and Washington's disagreement on how to resolve it—would endanger the Bush-Gorbachev summit meeting scheduled for May 30 in Washington. He said that the Kremlin understands that Bush is under pressure from some members of Congress to take firmer action against Moscow, but added, "We hope sober counsel will continue in the U.S. administration."

Maslennikov said that the Lithuanians had "brought the crisis on themselves" and that their leaders, especially Landsbergis and Prime Minister Kazimiera Prunskiene, were "acting like children who want their candy right away."

"We are not denying Lithuania the right to independence," Maslennikov said. "If they want to be independent, fine, but they have to go through the procedures of the Soviet constitution." He added that the Kremlin was not demanding, as a starting point for negotiations, that Vilnius rescind its March 11 declaration of independence, but that it must "at least" declare a freeze on all laws passed by its parliament since then.

The Lithuanians have not agreed to such a freeze, and a five-member delegation from Vilnius led by Vice President Bronius Kuzmickas continued today to search without success for an audience in Moscow with high-ranking Kremlin officials.

Like many other Soviet officials in recent weeks, Maslennikov repeatedly referred to theoretical American analogies. "What if Alaska decided it wanted to be on its own?" he said. "Could it just walk away or would it have to follow the procedures of the U.S. Constitution?"

Since the partial economic embargo began last week, most people in the Lithuanian capital have cut down on the use of private cars and are taking public transport.

More than 6,000 bus routes have been cut from ordinary schedules. The republic has begun a strict gasoline rationing program and the government has urged the minimal use of energy supplies. Electricity and heat in private homes and public buildings are still working normally, sources in Vilnius said.

More than 7,500 workers have been put out of their jobs since the

embargo began, a Lithuanian spokesman said. Lithuania's legislature set up an "anti-blockade commission" led by Prunskiene today to plan measures to ease the effects of Moscow's cutoff of oil, most natural gas, medicines and other goods.

Prunskiene is considering selling some of Lithuania's gold reserves in an attempt to buy oil abroad. The

republic has about \$25 million in gold that it transferred to French banks before World War II as a precaution. The Bank of France said last month that it would return the gold reserves to Lithuania if the French government decided to recognize the republic's independence. Lithuania, however, needs about \$55 million a month in oil to run the republic.